

New  Brunswick

Checklists for Detecting
Bias and Stereotyping in
Instructional Materials

Prepared by:
Program Development & Implementation Branch
Department of Education
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CHECKLIST
FOR
DETECTING BIAS AND STEREOTYPING
IN
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK
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Titania (Tanya) Tremblay - Acting Co-ordinator Curriculum Implementation,
Family Studies Consultant

Avis Fitton - Acting Social Studies Consultant

Darlene Whitehouse - Co-ordinator Elementary Education

INTRODUCTION

In February 1989, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Shirley Dysart, authorized the document *Sex Equity in our Schools: A Guideline for Action*. The document is intended to "promote department, district and school activities that will support the sex-equity principles related to Curriculum, Student Services, School Organization and Administration."

Further to this, the Ministerial Statement, Multiculturalism/Human Rights Education, August 1989, included in its Guiding Principles "that the school curriculum be free of bias and stereotyping and open to the study of the contributions and achievements of all peoples."

One of the tasks assigned to the Department of Education was to prepare guidelines for detecting stereotyping and bias in all instructional materials to assist those responsible for designing, writing, editing, publishing and selecting materials for the classroom.

The guidelines consist of a checklist and questions dealing with bias and stereotyping in general and specific subject areas.

NOTE:

Instructional materials include both print and non-print materials

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

BIAS:	an opinion, preference, prejudice or inclination formed usually without reasonable justification which then influences an individual's or group's ability to evaluate a particular situation objectively or accurately.
CULTURE:	refers to the full range of behaviour in a group, not just to literature, music, drama, and art. All aspects of each group's culture (aesthetics, law, language, religion, personality patterns, symbols, kinship arrangements, attitudes, customs, traditions, and the like) are closely woven into a pattern that is unique to each group. Cultural groups set a range of permissible behaviours for its members. There are alternative ways of being polite, of expressing affection, of being angry, of being cooperative and competitive, of expressing shape and experiencing time, etc.
DISCRIMINATION:	the conscious act of dealing with a person or persons on the basis of prejudicial attitudes and beliefs (rather than on the basis of individual merit). Thus prejudice is a state of mind, while discrimination is an action.
ETHNIC:	relating to or characteristic of a human group having racial, religious, linguistic and certain other traits in common.
ETHNICITY:	refers to the classification of human populations utilizing the bio-geographical criterion of ancestry in conjunction with such socio-cultural criteria as nationality, language and religion.
ETHNOCENTRIC:	regarding one's own race or cultural as the most important and judging other cultures as wrong or inferior simply because they do things differently.
INCLUSIONARY LANGUAGE:	includes all people in general references by substituting neutral words and phrases for "man-words."
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:	education which values highly the presence of many cultures within the school system.

RACE:

refers to the classification of human populations utilizing such biological criteria as physiological or genetic differences.

STEREOTYPE:

a false or generalized conception of a group of people that results in an unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group. Stereotypes may be based upon misconceptions or false generalizations about race, age, ethnic, linguistic, geographical or natural groups; religion, social, marital or family status; physical; development or mental attributes; gender.

SOURCE - GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

A Multicultural/Multiracial Approach to Education in the Schools of The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. Report of The Task Force on Multicultural/Multiracial Education. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

Checklist for Detecting Bias and Stereotyping in Instruction Material

	<u>Consistently</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
1. Does the author avoid an ethnocentric viewpoint?	_____	_____	_____
2. Does the material avoid biased representation through:			
a) factual error?	_____	_____	_____
b) misleading emphasis?	_____	_____	_____
c) selective omission?	_____	_____	_____
3. Does the material avoid subtle or veiled bias against:			
a) ethnic groups?	_____	_____	_____
b) gender?	_____	_____	_____
c) social or economic groups?	_____	_____	_____
d) religious groups?	_____	_____	_____
e) persons with disabilities?	_____	_____	_____
4. Are reference materials cited to redress multicultural imbalance?	_____	_____	_____
5. Do the illustrations avoid stereotypical representations of characters with regard to:			
a) gender?	_____	_____	_____
b) culture?	_____	_____	_____
c) race?	_____	_____	_____
d) social-economic status?	_____	_____	_____
e) disabilities?	_____	_____	_____

Consistently

Frequently

Rarely

6. Does the material offer insight into the lifestyles of others?

7. Is thinking logically, exploring, creating, cooperating with each other and providing leadership represented fairly for members of:

a) both genders?

b) various ethnic and cultural groups?

c) different social groups?

d) persons with disabilities?

8. Does the material avoid representing ethnic groups in stereotypical career choices? (e.g. Chinese restaurant owner, Inuit hunter and trapper)

9. Are members of the following groups presented adequately as examples of people who have excelled in their field without any suggestion that they are deviant from the norm?

a) gender

b) cultural/ethnic

c) race

d) social/economic groups

e) persons with disabilities

10. Are females and males represented realistically rather than glorified with no mention of their fears or weaknesses?

	<u>Consistently</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
11. Are values such as concern for people, empathy, gentleness, competition, strength, bravado depicted as appropriate to an individual rather than related to certain:			
a) genders?	_____	_____	_____
b) cultures?	_____	_____	_____
c) social groups?	_____	_____	_____
d) religions?	_____	_____	_____
e) disability groups?	_____	_____	_____
12. Are acceptable social behaviors portrayed without reference to:			
a) gender?	_____	_____	_____
b) race?	_____	_____	_____
c) cultural or ethnic group?	_____	_____	_____
d) social/economic group?	_____	_____	_____
e) religion?	_____	_____	_____
f) disability?	_____	_____	_____
13. Are both physical and intellectual activities participated in by:			
a) both genders?	_____	_____	_____
b) various races?	_____	_____	_____
c) different cultural and ethnic groups?	_____	_____	_____
d) different social/economic groups?	_____	_____	_____
e) various disability groups?	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Consistently</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
4. Does each group have a variety of choices and is the group encouraged to aspire to various goals including non traditional ones?			
a) both genders	_____	_____	_____
b) various races	_____	_____	_____
c) different cultural and ethnic groups	_____	_____	_____
d) different social/economic groups	_____	_____	_____
e) persons with disabilities	_____	_____	_____
15. Does the material refrain from depicting members of the following groups in only subservient and passive roles:			
a) gender?	_____	_____	_____
b) race?	_____	_____	_____
c) cultural/ethnic status?	_____	_____	_____
d) social/economic status?	_____	_____	_____
e) disability?	_____	_____	_____
16. Is every effort made to present materials from all groups?			
a) male and female	_____	_____	_____
b) different races	_____	_____	_____
c) different cultural and ethnic groups	_____	_____	_____
d) different social/economic groups	_____	_____	_____
e) persons with disabilities	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Consistently</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
17. Does the choice of print material, visual material, music, or art material appeal to:			
a) both genders?	_____	_____	_____
b) various races?	_____	_____	_____
c) various cultural and ethnic groups?	_____	_____	_____
d) all levels of social/economic status?	_____	_____	_____
e) persons with disabilities?	_____	_____	_____
18. Is inclusionary language used? (e.g. police officer instead of policeman, staffed by instead of manned by)	_____	_____	_____
19. Do both male and female members of a family have a variety of family responsibilities?			
a) females	_____	_____	_____
b) males	_____	_____	_____
20. Are both genders shown in a variety of occupations and careers, including non-traditional ones?			
a) females	_____	_____	_____
b) Males	_____	_____	_____
21. Are both genders shown as living or developing independent lives, meeting challenges independently, and attempting to find their own solutions?			
a) females	_____	_____	_____
b) males	_____	_____	_____

	<u>Consistently</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Rarely</u>
22. When an individual is portrayed as a full-time home-maker is that person depicted as competent and decisive?			
a) females	_____	_____	_____
b) males	_____	_____	_____
23. Are examples of non-traditional family units represented in a non-biased manner?			
a) single parent families	_____	_____	_____
b) blended families	_____	_____	_____
c) dual career families	_____	_____	_____

Comments

Consistently

Frequently

Rarely

Language Arts

24. Do language arts materials represent:

a) both genders?

b) various races?

c) different cultural and ethnic groups?

d) different social/economic groups?

e) persons with disabilities?

25. Are main characters represented equally in the materials chosen?

a) females

b) males

c) multicultural groups

d) different cultural and ethnic groups

e) social/economic groups

f) persons with disabilities

26. Does the material avoid portraying the appreciation of poetry as a predominately female trait, even by implication?

Comments

Mathematics and Science

Consistently

Frequently

Rarely

27. Are both genders included in instructional materials pertaining to mathematics and scientist? (e.g. Emily Noether, mathematician; Sally Ride, astronaut)
28. Are examples of males and females taking part in mathematics and science activities gender integrated? (e.g. labs, computers, using manipulatives)
29. Do the materials refer to both females and males in various careers which require mathematics and science? (e.g. medicine, law, trades)

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Comments

Music and Art

30. Is the Ethnic and Multicultural Art of Canada represented?
31. Are both males and females encouraged to participate equally in visual arts and music activities?
32. Is appreciation of the arts portrayed or implied as a trait shared by both males and females?
33. Are both females and males portrayed as playing any musical instruments and participating in chorale activities?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Comments

Consistently

Frequently

Rarely

Health and Physical Education

34. Are sports activities integrated so that they don't reflect a predominance of one single group (e.g. hockey-white male, tennis-middle class whites, basket ball-blacks)

a) by gender

b) by race

c) by social/economic status

35. Are leadership positions such as coach, referee, team captain, etc., portrayed by:

a) both genders?

b) various racial groups?

c) various cultural groups?

d) various persons with disabilities?

36. Does the study of sexuality and social development address the issue of gender discrimination?

Comments

Consistently Frequently Rarely

Home Economics, Industrial Education, Business Education and Technological Education

37. Do the materials portray both males and females as interested equally in home economics, industrial education, business education, and technological education?

38. In child care units are toys and activities gender-free?

39. Are teaching units on family living and child development written for:

a) both genders?

b) non traditional family units?

c) cultural and ethnic groups?

d) persons with disabilities?

40. Are both genders depicted as being competent in various activities related to home economics, industrial education, business education and technological education?

Comments

Consistently

Frequently

Rarely

Social Studies and History

41. Where appropriate, does the material include a section on social movements which address the social and economic implications of this movement? (e.g. Women's Suffrage Movement, The Black Movement, Native Rights, Japanese Canadians)

42. Is history related through information about both living conditions and lifestyles, (including information such as domestic life, social welfare, and education), rather than related solely in terms of conflict, (wars, military actions)?

43. In economic, social and political Canadian history, is there an acknowledgement of the roles of:

a) women?

b) various races?

c) different cultural and ethnic groups

d) social/economic groups?

e) persons with disabilities?

Comments

